

Edith Cowan University  
**Research Online**

---

Theses : Honours

Theses

---

1992

## A study of children's television viewing patterns

Ronald D. Gorman  
*Edith Cowan University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons)



Part of the [Broadcast and Video Studies Commons](#), and the [Television Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Gorman, R. D. (1992). *A study of children's television viewing patterns*. [https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons/253](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/253)

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.  
[https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons/253](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/253)

# Edith Cowan University

## Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

**A Study of Children's Television  
Viewing Patterns.**

**BY**

**Ronald David Gorman B. Ed., Grad. Dip. App. Film & TV.**

**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the award of**

**Bachelor of Education with Honours  
at the School of Education, Edith Cowan University**

**Date of submission: November 1992**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the television viewing patterns of primary school children. The major questions this study asks are;

- How much time do children spend watching television texts?
- What types of programmes do children watch?
- Who chooses what children watch?

Previous work on children's television viewing patterns is discussed; this indicates that (a) viewing patterns are influenced by the age of the child and the mode of access available to the child, and (b) educators are responsible for the development of children's visual literacy. To ascertain the nature of children's television viewing patterns, a questionnaire was administered and viewing record timetables completed. This enabled identification of viewing patterns of children of different age and sex. These patterns may be used to develop guidelines for the teaching of visual literacy in respect of television texts.

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Ronald David Gorman (Candidate)

## **Table of Contents**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
ABSTRACT	(ii)
DECLARATION	(iii)
LIST OF TABLES	(v)
CHAPTER ONE      Research Outline	1
CHAPTER TWO      Previous Research	7
CHAPTER THREE    Instruments	26
CHAPTER FOUR     Analysis of Data	32
CHAPTER FIVE      Conclusions and Implications	42
APPENDICES	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	57

### **List of Tables**

<b><u>Table</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
1	Amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping.	32
2	Amount of visual text viewed per week according to sex of subject.	33
3	Amount of visual text viewed per week by genre.	34
4	Amount of visual text viewed per week by mode of access.	34
5	Amount of visual text viewed per week according to year grouping and sex.	36
6	Amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping and genre.	37
7	Amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping and mode of access.	38
8	Amount of visual text viewed per week by sex and genre.	38
9	Amount of visual text viewed per week by sex and mode of access.	39
10	Amount of visual text viewed per week by genre and mode of access.	39



<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
11	Amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping and home access to a television and video recorder.	41
12	Chooser of visual texts (%) by year grouping.	41

## **Chapter One**

### **THE RESEARCH OUTLINE**

In Australia children complete an average of 11,500 hours of compulsory formal education. During that time they will have experienced 15,000 hours of film and television ( South Australian Education Department, 1983). These viewing experiences occur mainly outside the school environment. One of the roles of educators is to develop a visual literacy based on these experiences so as to enable children to be able to read and understand the content of programmes watched on television. Since video recorders have become commonplace in the home and since video libraries have proliferated, the nature of watching television texts has begun to change. Very little research has been involved with the investigation of children's viewing patterns in relation to the sources of television text, including broadcast and pre-recorded materials. Morley (1986) and St.Peters (1988) included video taped material in the overall question of television texts consumed however did not consider differences because of the mode of access. The purpose of this research is to investigate children's reported patterns of viewing

television texts.

The major questions for this research are;

- (1) How much time do children spend watching television texts?
- (2) What types of programmes do children watch? (programme types are classified into different genres.)
- (3) Who chooses what children watch?

This research will also consider the following subsidiary questions; Firstly, how much time children spend watching television text from each of the different modes, and secondly, how the content of television text varies from mode to mode across the four genres? A third question is about a possible change in viewing patterns of children between the different grades of schooling?

The television programmes and other material such as advertising seen on television are referred to as "television text" or "visual text".

The three modes of access are "broadcast television", "timeshift television" and "external video sources". Broadcast television refers to viewing of commercial and non-commercial station's broadcast programmes in real time. This means viewing the programmes at the time of transmission. Time shift television refers to broadcast television which has been recorded and then viewed at a time other than that of the broadcast. It will consist of the same programmes found on broadcast television, but varies in that programmes can be

watched more than once and can be freed from advertisements. This can be achieved by means of editing whilst recording or using the fast forward control when watching the recorded programme. External video source programmes will be mainly of a film type and can be watched more than once and are usually advertisement free except for producers' trailers. The majority of these programmes are video-tape versions of feature films seen in the cinema, and they come in a format similar to the text seen in the cinema. Some of these programmes are hired and some may be purchased. A few of these programmes may be prepared for sale without being shown in cinemas, such as programmes prepared for home aerobics, but this is an unusual occurrence.

The genres of programmes viewed are those identified by the Western Australian Ministry of Education in the English Language K-7 Syllabus (1990).

These genres are:

- (1) Narrative: such as soap operas, movies, mini series.
- (2) Expository: such as news and weather, documentary, political comment.
- (3) Transactional: such as announcements, sports commentary, advertising.
- (4) Poetic: such as cartoons.

Examples of the programmes which were telecast by broadcast television during the survey period are as follows as well as the broadcast television channel in brackets.

*Narrative Genre*: Eastenders (2), GP (2), Home and Away (7), A Country Practice (7), McHales Navy (9), China Beach (9), Murphy Brown (9), Neighbours (10), LA Law (10), Doogie Howser MD (10).

*Expository Genre*: All news/weather broadcasts (all channels), Behind The News (2), The Investigators (2), Beyond 2000 (7), A Current Affair (9).

*Transactional Genre*: Soccer (28), Grandstand (2), Football (7), Wide World of Sport (9), Aerobics Oz Style (10).

*Poetic Genre*: The Smoggies(2), Monkey (2), Roger Ramjet (2), Agro's Cartoon Connection (7), Magilla Gorilla (9), Tom and Jerry (9), The Buggs Bunny Show (9).

Some writers such as Monaco (1977) have given taxonomies which may include ten or more different genres, however the genres identified in the English Language K-7 Syllabus (1990) are appropriate for this study. It must be pointed out that the four genres identified here are really four groups of genres which reflect the groupings of written and spoken texts included in the English Language K-7 Syllabus(1990).

Children's choice of programme viewed may vary according to the mode(s) of access available to the child. The age and sex of the child may also have a bearing on programme choice. Another influence on children's choice of programme may be the person choosing the programme to be watched, such as self, parent, or sibling.

### PROCEDURE.

This descriptive study uses as its sample about 60 children in years K-7 in two independent community schools in the Fremantle district. Both these schools contain mainly Australian children (ie. non-ethnic, non-Aboriginal) from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The sampling period was two weeks.

Two means of gathering data were used. Firstly, a questionnaire was administered by teachers to build personal profiles on age, sex, position in family and modes of access available to each child (see appendix 1). Secondly, viewing diaries were kept to provide the viewing content profiles for each child (see appendix 2). The viewing diaries included such items as contact time, programme choice, and mode of access used. It was expected that the majority of data would come from this source. Classroom teachers were asked to administer the questionnaire to all the children in class. In the case of younger children classroom teachers interviewed them. Children completed record sheets in class each morning for the previous day's viewing. For viewing on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, children were asked to

take record sheets and complete them at home. These sheets were checked on Monday in class. When the record sheets were completed they yielded information about the frequency of responses to the different variables being measured.

## **Chapter 2**

### **PREVIOUS RESEARCH:**

Three areas of previous research can be identified as relevant to this study. This literature review will discuss firstly, the nature of television in a cultural framework, secondly, research into children's viewing patterns and thirdly, how children interact with television. Relevant sections of the English Language Syllabus K-7 will be reviewed in the light of the first three areas as a link towards curriculum design.

### **TELEVISION WITHIN A CULTURAL FRAMEWORK.**

Fiske and Hartley (1978) introduce the result of television in the home as a "literally a highly visible medium." They add "television, unaided, causes people to sit and watch". They explain that programmes are not poured into a viewer or absorbed by a viewer but that there is an interaction between viewer and television.

Whilst there is often argument that television competes for leisure time as suggested by Hodge and Tripp (1988), they argue that television fits quite comfortably in the home; that as a result of more leisure time being available in our society, television doesn't compete for time or against other activities but is an addition to, and leads back to other



activities. "It has bought new stimulus into the home, and created a demand for rather than less entertainment of other kinds" (p. 20).

What Hartley and Fiske argue is that the way an audience interacts with television is determined by the audience and that there is no purposeful manipulation of the audience from the television industry or by owners of television licenses. Further to this, they point out that "television is dependent upon more general cultural processes for its messages, modes and meanings" (p. 193). The theme of Hartley and Fiske's arguments may be summarized thus "Semiotics is beginning to reveal to us the extent to which our universe is 'man-made'. .....that 'reality' on television is a human construction. Furthermore, it is a construction which can be analysed" (p. 194).

Hartley and Fiske maintain that, given that television is a human construct, the audience has the ability to analyse this construct. For child audiences there is the potential to interact with visual text and develop strategies of analysis and understanding.

Hartley and Fiske propose a broad theoretical framework for understanding television. Its most important message is that television is a "person made" phenomenon and is culturally dependent. This means that television as part of a culture tends to reflect that dominant culture. Audiences may therefore feel less threatened by television and begin to understand it and their relationships with it. Whilst television does promote a dominant cultural position there is a

genuine need to understand television not only in this context but in the context of minority groups and non-represented groups. Hartley and Fiske's argument tends to strengthen the case for television studies as a cultural phenomenon. Further, the study of television as a social construct which is not necessarily totally representative of a particular society should form a crucial component of the school curriculum.

Hartley and Fiske conclude by saying that "Developing an awareness of how a particular reality is produced can enable us to avoid misconceptions about the nature of that reality. In addition it can lead to constructive criticism." (p. 194). Their view argues for a positive approach toward television viewing and includes the development of an awareness of dealing with television texts. These processes of awareness can take place in the formal educative arena.

Television viewing is by far the most accessible and one of the most highly consumed forms of popular culture. Beavis and Gough (1991) consider the case for students and their interaction with popular culture. "If students are to become active participants in learning, then their outlooks, culture and attitude need to be explored." (p. 123). They suggest that, given student's consumption of popular texts, popular texts be a curriculum priority rather than suppressing or ignoring such texts. Their position is that popular culture texts are a valuable

inclusion in the classroom.

Moss (1991) considers that the distinction between popular culture and other forms of literature is changing. In terms of reading texts, the gap between English and Media Studies is decreasing. Further that in terms of textual analysis the gap should not be there. "It is time we stopped privileging one form of reading and then judging all other forms in its terms..... The kinds of questions we should be asking ought to include: who is reading what text, where, under what circumstances; who is presenting that reading to whom, in what form , and for what purpose." (p.57).

Tripp (1988) summarizes the shift in realizing television as a cultural influence by saying "...I think we have begun to shift our view of the medium from seeing it as some kind of extra-terrestrial influence totally alien to our culture , ways of thought and indeed our natural development, and are now beginning to see it as an integral part of our culture, and as much determined by as determining us and our children." (p.15).

What is seen on television by children is part of their/our culture. They are interacting with texts constantly with television texts being a major part of their consumption.

## **RESEARCH INTO CHILDREN'S TELEVISION VIEWING PATTERNS.**

Horsfield (1986) recognizes that children from the age of two years old are active viewers of television and that watching television is an important part of a child's day. He points out that for primary school aged children there is a general increase in the amount of television watched which usually peaks around the age of twelve or thirteen.

Palmer (1986) discusses television as a process of communication. She points out that the agenda for much research has held notions that television can be a controlling power and is a "thing" leading to negative consequences. This has usually been the basis for control over children's television and control over their patterns of viewing. Her research in dealing with television as a means of communication took a different approach; she was interested in using the children's conceptual framework of television as the direction for the research project. She used loosely structured interviews, observation and surveys to gather data. Palmer found that children developed their own viewing patterns when watching their favorite programmes and that children felt positive about the viewing process. She also found that children tended not to watch television by themselves. Children more often watched television with parents, siblings or friends. In fact the watching of television programmes with others involved a great deal of social interaction both at the time of viewing and in activities

away from the television. Her finding also supported the notion that television does not decrease involvement in other activities.

It seems that in homes where the television is on for long hours, children do many other things around it. They have adapted television to the performance of other tasks, just as they have adapted themselves to the presence of television. Television and the child's leisure activities occur together in the social life of the family. (Palmer, (1986) p. 25).

Palmer's research is important in that she has dealt with television as a means of communication and left the "good versus bad" debate in an historic setting. She found that children's play based on television content was a social means of interpreting and making sense of what they see on television. What was also apparent was that children's genre preferences change with age. For example, she found that children aged eight to nine years hated news programmes above all others.

The framework upon which she based her research has helped lead the way towards a better understanding of the nature of television and in particular, children's interaction with it. There is a need for educators to become aware of the interaction children have with television and the varied relationships children of different ages have

with different programme types. Whilst her research findings were helpful in understanding the social nature of children's television viewing patterns, her conclusion still took a judgement on the quality of children's television; that is, that certain programmes intended for children were in her opinion not good. This may be fair discussion but was not substantiated by the basis of her research.

Morley (1986) discusses the changing patterns of television viewing within the overall context of family leisure activities. His research was based on structured interviews with eighteen families from one area south of London. The families were white, consisted of two adults and at least two children and each family possessed a video recorder. The aim was to find comparisons and contrasts of families of different socio-economic groupings and patterns of viewing of different aged children. Further to this, Morley wanted to find out who controls what is viewed. His lengthy description of interviews conducted was interesting and entertaining but in the analysis of the interviews the focus became the issue of 'television and gender'. He found this an important enough deviation to discuss to the exclusion of his central purpose. What he has done is to leave a conceptual model for others working in the field. It is the first research that has considered the video recorder as a source of television text and therefore as a source that broadens the choices for audiences. Morley listed "the use of video" as one of the choices of viewing source. He found that 33% of

his sample cited the use of a video recorder though the occurrence differed in the class groupings he identified; working class and lower/middle class. He identified class difference by employment, age at leaving school and home ownership status. He found that males used video recorders more than females and related this finding to a broader gender discussion focusing on traditional sex role stereotyping. Morley found that the video recorder was perceived as a mechanical device which was operated by 'fathers and sons' (p.158) and not to any great extent by any of the females in the sample. Morley's research is valuable in terms of differing gender viewing patterns. Further research could look at non-traditional families and families of minority groups .

In 1978, a Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts held an inquiry into 'The Impact of Television on the Development and Learning Behaviour of Children'. The inquiry found that there was a remarkable similarity of viewing habits of children in that most children watch an average of two to three hours of broadcast television per day. The inquiry also found that there was a clearly defined pattern of viewing related to age and that very little parental control was exerted over what was viewed. The conclusion of the inquiry with reference to viewing patterns was that television viewing had emerged as the most dominant activity in the life of Australian children other than sleep. Although this inquiry is dated it served as a bench mark for many

years. It is worthwhile considering its findings and asking the question, 'has anything changed?'.

When considering Media Education in Australia the inquiry suggested that given television is such an influence upon children they should be taught the skills of how to use it and further that children be trained to be appreciative, critical and discriminating so as to be able to evaluate what is viewed from the television.

Sharman (1979) in his review of research current in the seventies found that television viewing was a major leisure time activity. Findings indicated that television viewing took up more leisure time than any other activity. He found that children prefer programmes which were fantasy oriented in content. It was found that children watched a higher proportion of animated type programmes than narrative type programmes. He also found that age and sex appeared to be the variable influencing programme choice rather than the amount viewed. The research suggested that the genre of programme viewed can be linked to age and that preferred choice of programme genre changes according to age grouping. For example he found that younger children aged five years old to seven years old preferred fantasy animated type programmes and that this preference was not the case for older children.



Banks & Gupta (1979) found that children's age and television consumption were related. Children's viewing consumption decreased with age. The reported amounts of viewing per day were 5.0, 3.9, and 3.2 hours for children in the third, fifth and seventh grades respectively. This was the case for the sample in the United Kingdom at the period of survey. The research found that there was no significant difference in viewing times due to sex. Genre choice was not a variable in the research design. The research simply focused on the amount of television viewed and what factors could be identified as effecting the amount of television viewed. An interesting result of the research concerned the forces that influenced a child's viewing pattern. The Inquiry suggested a division of the forces into; (1) External forces, that is, parents, siblings and opportunities and (2) Internal forces, that is, the child's own feelings towards his or her viewing habits. The researchers felt the internal force a difficult one to measure. An anxiety/attitude test was only one way of dealing with the internal force. Whilst this research is now more than ten years old, it is a good example of where research began to consider television as a dependent variable. Banks & Gupta (1979) suggested that one of the external forces on the child's viewing patterns was the influence of the parent.

Crouch (1990) found that the consumption of the narrative genre varied for different age groups as it did for the sex of the viewer. He

found that the narrative genre became the dominant genre for children aged 11 years. He concluded on research into the narrative genre that, "Primary school children are already involved with the medium, committed to particular programmes which although ephemeral, fleeting and replaceable, are exemplary of genres likely to persist." (p.22 ). He considered that the viewing patterns that he found were like a link between childhood and adulthood. He was supportive of the educative role of the inclusion of television as part of children's experiences. "Rather than condemn or ignore children's media preferences we should explore them and explore them with children, enable them to articulate why they like this or that programme." (p.22 ).

## **RESEARCH INTO CHILDREN'S INTERACTION WITH TELEVISION.**

A number of researchers found that there were factors which influenced children's interaction with television. These factors included the chronological development of the child and parents as being influential as to programme choice.

Winick & Winick (1979) researched the different "meanings" children experienced from television at different age levels. They suggested that children watched television for a variety of reasons. They also suggested that because viewing television occupies much of children's lives at home and outside school the television viewing

should be considered a significant developmental experience. The researchers found that regular viewing of television begins around the age of three and remains relatively high until the age of twelve. They also found that children of parents with heavy viewing patterns were themselves more likely to display heavy viewing patterns. However, children were more likely to watch television with siblings than with parents. They also found that differences of viewing patterns were not significant between the sexes up to the age of ten. In fact the similarities were of particular interest. Another finding was that programme popularity may be interpreted in terms of developmental level. That is to say that children of different ages and adults may all be enthusiastic about one particular programme for a variety of different reasons. The main finding of the study was that children's television experience differs from adults.

The issue of parental control of child viewing patterns surfaced as a major research question for Fry & McCain (1980) when they asked, "What are the television viewing rules parents have for regulating their children's use of television?" (p. 7). Using an open ended Likert type questionnaire, Fry and McCain found that when considering rules related to watching television they must be considered with other family orientations and behaviors. They were therefore unable to answer the questions adequately. There is an indication that research needed to consider attitudes towards viewing patterns in social

contexts rather than to consider rules of television viewing as an independent variable. This certainly fits with current thinking of television being an interactionary process in our social setting as mentioned in earlier discussion.

McDonald & Glynn (1986) pointed out that there had been an absence of research into how much television is watched and the context in which it is watched.

Because television viewing patterns are not taught by television itself, McDonald and Glynn suggested that norms of viewing patterns of children are shaped by family and friends. A telephone survey found that approval of five different television content types differed for adults and children. The adult sample felt that crime shows and adult movies were not meant for children whereas there was approval for cartoons, sports and news programmes as suitable for children. What seemed to be apparent from the research was that adult norms for child viewing patterns were different from adults norms for adult viewing patterns. Also that modelling was the means whereby children adopted the adult norm. They suggested that children may in fact be the leaders in setting the norms of viewing patterns in the home. This research is important in its attempt to open the debate of source and content of child viewing patterns. However, as the data was collected solely from a telephone survey, the results are vulnerable to the "Hawthorne Effect" (ie. subjects answering the way they felt they were

meant to answer and because they knew they were in a survey).

St. Peters (1988) researched the viewing patterns of children when watching alone and when watching with parents. He suggested that parents could influence children's viewing patterns by modelling, direct control or parental regulation. He found that children accommodated their parents' viewing patterns while gradually developing their own. He also found that the majority of children's viewing of adult programmes was with parents and finally that co-viewing of children's programmes declined with age, as children's independent viewing of such programmes developed or increased. The study was quite exhaustive and provided valuable information about changes in viewing patterns from ages three to seven. It is significant that this study also included video tape material as television viewing. This was similar to the findings of Durkin (1988) who supported findings that children watch a high amount of adult television particularly in the pre adolescent years.

## **CHILDREN'S TELEVISION VIEWING AND THE CURRICULUM.**

Ableman & Courtright (1983) studied curriculum intervention towards "showing children how to watch television and obtain something beneficial from the experience". Their study involved pre and post

testing in the form of a written questionnaire on an experimental group and control group. The curriculum intervention was by means of watching pre-recorded television programmes which were discussed in the class setting. Critical skills of television watching were developed in the experimental group. They concluded that, ".....television literacy curriculum can be as much a social force as the medium itself." (p 56). The researchers suggested that teaching television literacy could be as powerful a force as exposure to the medium of television itself.

Hodge and Tripp (1986) provide an excellent framework for researchers to understand how children grow up and relate to television. Their final hypothesis (of ten) is that,

The school is site where television should be thoroughly understood, and drawn into the curriculum in a varied of positive ways. (p. 218)

Their message is that educators must understand television, not criticize it, and make it a welcome inclusion in the school curriculum.

The suspicion of television by educators, the barriers that are set up between television and schooling, are we feel, unjustified and wasteful of a potentially valuable resource. (p. 218)

Hodge and Tripp maintained that as television is a major part of our lives and in particular the lives of children, there needs to be a breaking down of these barriers. The contrary should apply, that is, television is a valuable resource because it is a part of children's lives and if dealt with positively could become the valuable resource it has the potential to be.

The common argument is that one should keep television out of the school because 'children spend too much time in mindless television viewing anyway'. This is in fact as good a reason for bringing television into the school curriculum as it is for excluding it. The less one knows and understands about the medium, the less one engages with it in a discriminating fashion. (p. 218)

By teaching skills in visual literacy, children will develop a more critical appreciation of what they watch, not only of programme content and production techniques, but also of making sense of their world and the role television plays in it.

Television literacy and appreciation are obvious school subjects which seem to be making too little progress. Overall, television is a factor which modern education cannot simply deplore or

ignore, but should come to terms with as part of its primary function of equipping students to be adequate citizens in the society in which they live. (p. 218)

Horsfield (1986) concurs with the teaching of television/visual literacy skills both at home and in the classroom. He points out that children need to be taught specifically how to read television texts critically with the same seriousness as is done with written communication

The English Language Syllabus K-7 (1990) includes television a source of text. It further divides the content of television into four areas of text and assigns programme types to these four areas or 'genre' groupings. The four genres are narrative, expository, transactional and poetic. The narrative area includes programmes such as soap operas, movies and 'mini' series. The expository area includes programmes such as news, weather, political comments and reports. The transactional area includes programmes such as sports commentary and pro-motions including advertising. The final area , poetic, includes such programme types as cartoons and animated features.

The syllabus claims "It is difficult and somewhat artificial to divide one



form another, or one medium from another .....when does video become television?" p.18. The assumption here is that children will experience all forms of television text. Educators must firstly have some guide as to the source of the television text and the content as well as differences that may occur due to external forces. Then, they are able to better deal with the more specific viewing patterns of children and develop an appropriate visual literacy.

Gough (1988) suggests diligence and caution in curriculum design for children. The outcomes must not necessarily be those focusing on adult outcomes. In choosing texts suitable for children they need to reflect what children are exploring so that educators are working with children and not children being shaped by adults.

Television texts chosen for inclusion in the curriculum can be those which will adhere to the outcome statements as drafted by the Ministry of Education (1992) as well as reflecting the types of visual texts that children of different age grouping are consuming.

The research literature reviewed here reveals that television is a cultural phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that has a bearing on how children make sense of their world. This review also gives an insight into a number of studies that indicate general patterns of viewing television texts for children. It further indicates a number of factors

which influence the children's choices of visual text. The final section of the literature reviewed here suggests that the development of visual literacy at school level should be a priority for educators. It is clear that the need to have updated information on children's viewing patterns is important for the general comment on children's viewing patterns as well as for accurate curriculum design. Thus, the need for further research into current patterns of viewing television texts is important as the basis for evaluating the development of visual literacy in classroom teaching.

The following chapters work towards revealing more information that may be useful in understanding children's viewing patterns particularly for educators of primary school aged children.

## **Chapter Three**

### **INSTRUMENTS:**

This chapter describes the design of the instruments needed to answer the research questions listed in Chapter One:

- (1) How much time do children spend watching television texts?
- (2) What types of programmes do children watch?
- (3) Who chooses what children watch?

This chapter also describes the trialling of the instruments and the implementation of the instruments upon the sample.

As previously stated this research project is designed to establish the viewing patterns of primary aged children from two community schools. The methodology adopted was a quantitative one in which biographical information and data collected reflected the amounts of time, in hours and minutes, the sample spent in receiving visual text.

#### **• Design**

The instruments were designed to collect biographical information of the sample and to establish television viewing patterns of the sample.

The biographical data was gathered by means of a questionnaire. (appendix 1). There were ten questions in the questionnaire. Question one asked the chronological age of the child and question two was designed to establish the class grouping of the child into one of four groups. Question three asked for the sex of the child. Questions four to seven were designed to establish the position in the family with respect to siblings. Questions eight to ten sought to find out what access each child had to a television set and a video recorder.

The viewing pattern data of the sample was gathered by means of three "viewing diaries" (appendix 2). The three diaries were designed to gather data so as to reveal what each child watched from the three described sources of visual text. These three sources being (1) Broadcast Television (2) Videos hired or purchased and (3) Timeshift television (material taped from television and watched later). The three diaries were titled 'Television Diary', 'Video Diary (Hired/Purchased)' and 'Video Diary (Taped from the television)'.

The diaries were colour differentiated so that a further emphasis was placed on the correct recording of information. The Television Diary was printed on white paper, the Video Diary (Hired/Purchased) was printed on pink paper and the Video Diary (Taped from television) was printed on green paper.

The Television Diary was designed in a grid configuration so as to allow the viewer to easily record when broadcast television was watched, what channel was watched and who chose the programme. The grid pattern allowed the child to simply put a tick in the appropriate space relating time watched and channel watched.

Each space represented one half hour of viewing of any particular channel. The period of one half hour was chosen as previous consideration of broadcast television programming indicated that most programmes were of half hour duration or a multiple of one half hour. On that same horizontal line space was provided to allow a recording of who chose the programme. The ticks in the grids could then be matched to actual programme type at the completion of the survey period.

Both Video Diaries required the viewer to record information about the specific programme watched. The three responses required were for the child to record the name of what was watched, how long did you watch that programme and who chose the programme.

- **Trial**

The Viewing Diaries were trialled for a period of five days with a group of five children ranging years K-7. Parents and children in the trial sample were asked to respond to (1) what age did children need help in completing the questionnaire and the diaries and (2) the usability of the diaries. The trial indicated that the diaries were suitably designed to record the information that was being sought. Respondents indicated that children in the K-2 group required parental assistance in completing the questionnaires and the diaries. Discussions revealed that most children and parents completed the diaries daily and had placed these on the television as a reminder. This information became part of the means of administering the questionnaire and was used to develop general instruction given to the children and parents immediately before the survey period.

- **Implementation**

The implementation of the instruments required a number of processes to ensure the successful completion of the questionnaire and survey sheets.

Firstly a letter of explanation of the research project and a copy of the research proposal was forwarded with a further letter from the Western Australian College of Advanced Education to the Principals of both schools involved in the project. Both Principals responded positively

to allowing the research to take place, however, in each case a formal approval from the School Councils was also sought. The researcher attended each School's Council meeting to discuss the research project and answer questions. Once official approval was granted from each school a timeline of events was developed to ensure the effective implementation of the questionnaire and survey. This consisted of a lead up period of about four weeks which included the administration of the questionnaire and a 2 week survey period. During the four week lead up period a letter describing the project was sent to each family grouping (appendix 3).

Other purposes of the letter was to assure confidentiality and to invite questions about the project. Responses to the letter which effected the project were to inform me of children's absence or partial absence during the survey period. Parent evenings were held at each school. These were advertised through school newsletters and by separate reminder notes sent home with the children. Each of the parent evenings were well attended. At these evenings the research proposal was discussed at length and examples of the draft questionnaire and survey sheets were circulated. Time was given to instructing parents as to how to correctly fill in the survey sheets. Those who attended the evenings indicated that they had an interest in issues related to television and this was reflected in the content of the general discussion at the conclusion of each evening.

The researcher attended the staff meetings of each school to discuss the project. All staff had knowledge of the project as the research proposal had been sent to each principal several months before-hand. At these meetings the administration of the questionnaire and the logistics of the distribution and collection of survey materials was discussed.

During this week class lists from each school were supplied. These lists were number coded by an assistant. The numbers attributed to each child were to ensure anonymity. The principal of each school held these for correct distribution of questionnaires and survey forms. Both principals returned these lists to the research assistant at the conclusion of the data collection period and the lists were promptly destroyed. A workshop was organized for students in years 2-7 to enable them to understand how to fill in the survey material. Overhead projection examples were shown and discussed. The two week survey period ran from Friday 15th June, 1990 to Thursday 28th June, 1990. This was necessary to fit in with each school's term agenda. The questionnaire was administered the Wednesday prior to the survey period. Survey material was sent home with each child on Thursday, the day before recording of viewing patterns was to commence. The viewing diaries were distributed weekly and collected on the Friday of each week.



## Chapter Four

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA:**

At the conclusion of the survey period, the survey documents were matched with the questionnaires and information contained in those documents was entered into a data base. The analysis of this data will allow the answering of the research questions.

#### **• Amount of visual text watch by year grouping.**

The amount of visual text watched in the four year groupings increased as the year grouping increased. From year K-1 through to year 4-5 the amount of visual text watched increased gradually. There was a major increase in the amount of visual texts watched by the year 6-7 grouping. The children in the year 6-7 grouping were clearly the major consumers of visual texts watching about half an hour per day more than the nearest year grouping.

**Table 1:**

**Amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping.**

Year Group	Min. Hours Viewed	Max. Hours Viewed	Average
K - 1	4h 5m	20h 2m	12h 26m
2 - 3	4h	17h 10m	13h 34m
4 - 5	3h 30m	25h 50m	14h 19m
6 - 7	5h 10m	39h	17h 58m

- **Amount of visual text viewed by sex.**

The amount of visual text viewed by boys and girls varied very little with girls watching slightly more than boys. For this sample sex difference did not seem to be a factor effecting the amount of visual text viewed.

Table 2:

Average amount of visual text viewed per week according to sex of subject.

Sex	Average Amount Viewed
Male	14h 36m
Female	15h 34m

- **Amount of visual text viewed by genre.**

The data revealed that two genres made up most of the visual text watch by the sample. Genre one (narrative) and genre four (poetic) accounted for 90% of what was watched with genre one being the dominant genre of the two. Programmes identified as genre three (transactional) type programmes were viewed very lightly by the sample. The data also revealed that the major programme type watch form genre one was soap operas. Virtually all programmes watched in genre four (poetic) were cartoons/animation.

**Table 3:**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by genre.**

Genre	Average Amount Viewed
Genre 1 - Narrative	7h 38m
Genre 2 - Expository	1h 10m
Genre 3 - Transactional	20m
Genre 4 - Poetic	5h 29m

**• Amount of visual text viewed by mode of access.**

The amount of visual text viewed from the different modes of access revealed that Broadcast Television was the dominant mode of access. Hired videos and timeshift television, both requiring access to a video recorder, accounted for almost a quarter of the amount of visual text watch by the sample.

**Table 4:**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by mode of access.**

Mode of Access	Average Amount Viewed
Broadcast TV	11h 6m
Video (Hired)	1h 40m
Timeshift	1h 52m

It must be noted here that all analysis of data deals with the whole sample and does not differentiate between home access to a television set only and home access to a video recorder as well.

However, brief consideration of the difference between home access to television as opposed to home access to both television and video recorder is made later in this chapter.

• **Amount of visual text viewed by year grouping and sex.**

In the year K-1 grouping it was revealed that boys watch more visual text than girls. The amount of visual text viewed by the different sexes varied greatly for the year 2-3 grouping and the year 4-5 grouping. For this sample, girls in the year 2-3 grouping watched about twice as much visual text than boys in this year grouping. This was almost reversed for the year 4-5 grouping with boys being the dominant consumers of visual texts.

Girls in the year 6-7 grouping were the major consumers of visual texts. The differences in the amount of visual texts viewed for boys and girls for the year groupings 2-3 and 4-5 may reflect different leisure time activities being specific to those year levels.

Table 5:

Average amount of visual text viewed per week according to year grouping and sex.

Year Group	Male (Average)	Female (Average)
K - 1	13h 23m	11h 2m
2 - 3	8h 8m	17h 27m
4 - 5	16h 42m	10h
6 - 7	16h 48m	19h 3m

• **Amount of visual text viewed by year grouping and genre.**

Genres one (narrative) and four (poetic) were viewed heavily in comparison to genres two (expository) and three (transactional). The amount of visual text viewed from genre one (narrative) increased steadily across the age groupings revealing that it was the major genre choice for the year 4-5 grouping and more so for the year 6-7 grouping. Almost the reverse was the case for visual text from genre four (poetic). The year groupings K-1 and 2-3 were the major consumers of visual texts from genre four (poetic). There is a steady change from genre four (poetic) programmes being the dominant choice for younger children toward a preference for genre one (narrative) programmes for older children.

Genre two (expository) was viewed little for Years K-3 with an increase in year 4-7. Genre three (transactional) was viewed little by all age groupings.

The data also revealed that evening viewing increased as the children viewed more visual text from genre one (narrative). The year K-1 age group viewed the majority of visual text from genre four (poetic) during the hours from 6 a.m to 9am, these being the morning cartoon programmes.

**Table 6:**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping and genre.**

Year Group	Genre 1 Narrative (Average)	Genre2 Expository (Average)	Genre 3 Transactional (Average)	Genre 4 Poetic (Average)
K - 1	2h 57m	26m	2m	9h 11m
2 - 3	3h 59m	12m	15m	6h 30m
4 - 5	8h 36m	1h 59m	9m	3h 36m
6 - 7	11h 25m	1h 40m	42m	4h 11m

**• Amount of visual text viewed by year grouping and mode of access.**

The information gathered shows that the viewing of broadcast television was the dominant source of visual texts for all age groupings. There was a decrease in the use of hired videos as the year grouping increased. The year 2-3 grouping and year 4-5 grouping were the greatest users of timeshift television.

**Table 7:**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping and mode of access.**

Year Group	Television (Average)	Video (Average)	Timeshift (Average)
K - 1	9h	1h 56m	1h 40m
2 - 3	8h 20m	1h 57m	2h 40m
4 - 5	10h 21m	1h 14m	2h 44m
6 - 7	14h 44m	1h 4m	1h 30m

**• Amount of visual text viewed by sex and genre.**

The amount of visual text viewed varied little for all genres for both sexes.

**Table 8:**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by sex and genre.**

Sex	Genre 1 (Average)	Genre 2 (Average)	Genre3 (Average)	Genre 4 (Average)
Male	8h	1h 13m	10m	5h 47m
Female	7h 35m	1h 7m	32m	5h 31m

**• Amount of visual text viewed by sex and mode of access.**

The data revealed that girls were the greater users of television as a source of visual text whereas boys were the greater users of both hired video and time shift television.

**Table 9 :**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by sex and mode of access.**

Sex	Television (Average)	Video (Average)	Timeshift (Average)
Male	10h 14m	2h 5m	2h 17m
Female	12h 20m	1h 14m	1h 59m

**• Amount of visual text viewed by genre and mode of access.**

The use of a video recorder was minimal for genres two (expository) and three (transactional). The greatest use of hired videos and timeshift television was for genre one (narrative). About half an hour per week was devoted to the usage of hired videos and timeshift television for genre four (poetic). It is evident here also that broadcast television was the dominant source of visual text. Broadcast television was the only source of visual text for genre three (transactional).

**Table 10**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by genre and mode of access.**

Genre	Television (Average)	Video (Average)	Timeshift (Average)
Genre 1-Narrative	5h 17m	1h 9m	1h 12m
Genre 2-Expository	55m	-	16m
Genre 3-Transactional	20m	-	-
Genre 4-Poetic	4h 35m	31m	24m



- **Amount of visual text viewed by year grouping and home access to television and video-cassette player.**

The main factor influencing children's choice of the source of visual text is home access to a video recorder. Of the sample, 36 children had home access to a video recorder whilst 28 did not.

Children in the K-1 age grouping with home access to a video recorder watched more than twice the amount of visual text than children with only a television. The extra amount viewed being an average of 8 hours 30 minutes per week. Children in the Year 2-3 age grouping showed no major difference in the amount of visual text viewed with or without access to a video recorder. Children in the Year 4-5 age group with access to a video recorder watched an average of 4 hours 9 minutes more visual text per week than children without access to a video recorder. Children in the Year 6-7 age grouping with access to a video recorder also watched more visual text, 2 hours 47 minutes, than those children in the same age grouping without access to a video recorder.

The data revealed that the genre preference for each year grouping was similar whether the child had access to a video recorder or not. Access to a video recorder enabled children to simply watch more of the same. In all cases, access to a video recorder meant an increase in the amount of visual text watched.

**Table 11 :**

**Average amount of visual text viewed per week by year grouping**

**and home access to television and video recorder.**

Year Group	Home access to television and video. (Average)	Home access to television only. (Average)
K - 1	16h 25m	7h 55m
2 - 3	12h 40m	12h 30m
4 - 5	15h 31m	11h 22m
6 - 7	19h 30m	16h 43m

**• Chooser of Visual Text**

In all age groupings the major chooser of visual text, sited by the child, was the child . No other chooser group demonstrated a major impact on the children's choice of visual texts. Table 12 illustrates this predominance

**Table 12:**

**Chooser of Visual Texts (%) By Year Grouping**

Chooser	Year K-1	Year 2-3	Year 4-5	Year 6-7
1: Self	78%	70%	73%	79%
2: Parent	9%	9%	9%	10%
3: Sibling	8%	10%	12%	5%
4: Other	5%	11%	6%	6%

## **Chapter Five**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:**

This research has highlighted a number of findings related to children's viewing patterns and has raised some issues for consideration when programming units in Media Studies in the Primary School.

It is clear that a major part of children's time is devoted to the consumption of visual texts. This study showed that, for this sample, children watch up to an average of just over two and a half hours of visual text every day. The study also revealed that the amount of visual text watched increases with the child's age.

These findings are similar to those of Horsfield (1986) and the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts (1978). The amount of visual text consumed by children indicates that the viewing of visual texts is a major part of children's lives and no doubt plays a major part in the social and cultural understandings that children get from these experiences. It is reasonable to suggest therefore that the analysis of visual text also be a part of the children's experiences. This can be affectively achieved at school across the class groupings. Further, that the amount of time devoted to the study of visual texts increase as

children pass through the different year levels given the increase in time spent watching visual texts increases as children get older.

This study also found that the sex of the child had some bearing on the amount of visual texts watched by the child. Boys in the year

K-1 grouping tended to spend more time watching visual texts than girls in the year K-1 year grouping. However girls in the year 6-7 grouping watched more visual text than boys in the year 6-7 year grouping. The high incidence of viewing for girls in the Year 6-7 grouping was in the narrative genre. This paralleled the findings of Crouch (1989).

For the year groupings 2-3 and 4-5 the watching of visual texts varied greatly. Girls in the year 2-3 age grouping watch just over twice as much as boys in this grouping whereas this pattern seemed almost reversed with boys in the year 4-5 age grouping watched a far greater amount than the girls for that grouping. Horsfield (1986) found a lag in the amount viewed in the early years of primary schooling but not for the year levels as indicated in this research. There may be a link between reading development of the sexes relating to the varying amounts of visual text viewed by the two groups. There may also be a difference in genre choice based on reading development at these year levels as well. Further, if the watching of visual texts is considered as a leisure activity then other leisure pursuits may be an influence on the amount of visual text a child watches as he or she progresses

through the year groupings 2-3 and 4-5. In any case there is a number of questions raised here that could be answered by further, more specific research.

The mode of access to visual texts is influencing the amount of visual texts children watch. Broadcast Television is clearly the major source of visual texts with hired videos and timeshift television making up close to a quarter of the source of visual texts.

The age and sex of the child influenced the amount of visual text watched from the different modes. Children in the year grouping 2-3 and 4-5 were greater consumers of visual text from timeshift television and hired videos than in the other year groupings. Children in the year 6-7 age grouping watched the least visual text from hired videos or timeshift television. Boys viewed more visual text from hired videos and timeshift television. This may reflect the male dominance of machine usage as discussed by Morley (1986).

An important influence on the amount of visual text watched by different modes of access was the children's access to a video cassette recorder. Those children with home access to video cassette recorder watched more visual text than those without home access to a video cassette recorder, particularly in the year K-1 grouping. There are possible implications here if Australia heads towards a more deregulated broadcast television scenario. As the indications from this survey suggest, the more access to text the more texts are viewed,

then there is an even stronger need for the teaching of the reading of visual texts. This survey of course has indicated this as a possibility. There is certainly a case to consider the question of access to texts from various modes effecting the amount of texts viewed in more depth. Certainly, as the face of Australian television changes, it would be of great benefit to parents and educators to know how these changes are effecting our viewing habits.

From the findings of this survey it can be said that the amount of visual text that children surveyed watch will most likely increase as home access to a video cassette recorder increases.

One major implication of this study is that the watching of visual texts from all modes of access is a major activity for children. Further, that with the continued increase in the number of video cassette recorder in Australian homes the amount of visual text watched by children will most likely increase. For educators this means a substantial weighting should be given the study of visual text and visual literacy across the age ranges in Primary School.

This study also revealed that children are the major chooser of what they watch, a finding which parallels that of Palmer (1986). This survey asked the child to cite who chose the programme viewed. Although a programme may have been selected by or chosen for a child, the child may still have registered on the survey sheet that she or he perceived

themselves as choosing that programme. This area of evaluation as to the chooser of the programme and further, the interaction in front of the screen possibly needs a different research procedure. The more naturalistic research of Dr. Geoff Lealand which is currently in progress may give a greater insight into this area of children's viewing habits.

Whilst a lot of concern over the content of what children watch, it is the case that the results of this research indicate that the children surveyed are, or believe they are, the major chooser of what they watch. Knowing this, it is important therefore to consider more critically the types of visual text that children choose to watch. This will enable the educator to more carefully tailor lessons so that the analysis of visual text can be targeted at the types of programmes that children of a particular age group are watching.

The analysis of the data related to the genres of programmes that is watched by children is valuable in this case. Children of different age groupings have specific genre preferences. Children in the year K-1 age grouping have the highest consumption of visual text of genre four (poetic). The children in year 6-7 grouping show a high consumption of visual text from genre one (narrative).

The children in years 2-3 and 4-5 reflect the transition of preference from genre four (poetic) to genre one (narrative).

Narrative and poetic genres make up the majority of what children

watch . It seems clear that the studies of visual text need to reflect the types of programmes that children are watching, specifically targeting the genre type that is mostly consumed by any particular age group. This is not to disregard studies of programme types from genres other than those preferred by a particular age group but to put into balance curriculum material that is reflective of children's experience. With the seemingly greater acceptance of the study of visual texts as a valuable classroom experience the indicators of genre preference found in this study can be used as the basis for the choice of text studied in the classroom. The First Steps Programme continuum allows suitable placement of appropriate text genres. This can also be done in conjunction with either the forthcoming Outcome Statements being developed by the Ministry of Education (WA) or future National Statements that Western Australian educators may be dealing with. The teaching of the critical reading of texts can also be applied to genre specific textual studies.

Whilst this study provides valuable local information for the time being, there is always a need to be vigilant in detecting changes in children's viewing patterns. Certainly, the possible future deregulation of broadcast television, as seen in New Zealand, will alter television viewing patterns. Further, with the inevitable changes in global communications technologies such as cable television and digital technologies children will have a yet unknown amount and variation of



visual texts available to them. If and when these events occur, then certainly there will be a need to look again carefully at children's television viewing patterns.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire administered to gather biographical data.

QUESTIONNAIRE :

Q 1

Answer all the questions.

If you are stuck on a question, ask your teacher for help.

Do NOT put your name on the questionnaire.

1. How old are you ? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months.
2. What grade are you in ? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a boy or a girl ? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many older brothers do you have ? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many older sisters do you have ? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many younger brothers do you have ? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many younger sisters do you have ? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you have a television at home ? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many televisions do you have at home ? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you have a video recorder at home ? \_\_\_\_\_

ID. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cover pages and sample recording page of each diary type.

Q4/1

**TELEVISION DIARY**

When you watch a TV programme, put a tick in the channel column that shows when you watched the programme. Also write down who chose the programme. When you write down who chose the programme use words like Me, Mum, Older Brother (OB), Uncle, etc. You can ask for help at home, or at school the next day.

ID. No. 20 ...

# **THURSDAY**

	CH. 9	CH. 7	CH. 10	CH. 2 (ABC)	CH. 28 (SBS)	Who chose the programme ?
5.00-5.30 AM						
5.30-6.00 AM						
6.00-6.30 AM						
6.30-7.00 AM						
7.00-7.30 AM						
7.30-8.00 AM						
8.00-8.30 AM						
8.30-9.00 AM						
9.00-9.30 AM						
9.30-10.00 AM						
10.00-10.30 AM						
10.30-11.00 AM						
11.00-11.30 AM						
11.30-12.00 AM						
12.00-12.30 PM						
12.30-1.00 PM						
1.00-1.30 PM						
1.30-2.00 PM						
2.00-2.30 PM						
2.30-3.00 PM						

Please turn over for the rest of the day.

ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

**VIDEO DIARY** (Taped from the television)

Use this diary for videos that you have taped from the television and watched later. They can be videos that someone else has taped from the television and lent to you.

When you watch a VIDEO, write down the name of the video, how long it went for, and who chose it. When writing who chose the video use words like Me, Mum, Older Brother (OB), Uncle, etc.. You can ask for help at home, or at school the next day.

20  
ID. No. ....

<b><u>FRIDAY</u></b>		
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>HOW LONG ? (minutes)</b>	<b>WHO CHOSE IT ?</b>

ID. No. \_\_\_\_\_

**VIDEO DIARY (Hired/purchased)**

**Use this diary for videos that you have hired from a video shop, or that you have bought and you keep at home.**

**When you watch a VIDEO, write down the name of the video, how long it went for, and who chose it. When writing who chose the video, use words like Me, Mum, Older Brother (OB), Uncle, etc.. Don't use names. You can ask for help at home, or at school the next day.**

ID. No. 20

<b><u>FRIDAY</u></b>		
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>HOW LONG ? (minutes)</b>	<b>WHO CHOSE IT ?</b>

ID. No. \_\_\_\_\_



Letter to parents of children to be surveyed.



Lance Holt School

Dear Parent(s),

As mentioned in the previous School Newsletter I will be conducting a survey of children's television viewing patterns. The purpose of the survey is to gather information related to the type of television or video material children watch so as to develop curriculum suggestions specifically related to the findings. Anonymity is assured throughout the gathering of data.

The survey will commence on Friday 15th June and run for a period of two weeks concluding on the 28th June. The information will be gathered by means of three 'diaries'. Firstly, one for watching programmes from the television. Secondly, one for watching Video programmes hired from a video shop or videos that have been purchased. Thirdly, one for watching programmes that have been taped from the television and watched at a later date.

The diaries will be sent home weekly. To ensure the success of the project please make sure that the diaries are kept safe and up to date.

The survey is designed to determine what children watch so please avoid changes in viewing patterns during or because of the survey.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of the project with me at school or by contacting me at home. Ph [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Ron Gorman

### Bibliography:

Abelman, R., & Courtright, J. (1983). Television literacy: amplifying the cognitive level effect of television pro-social fare through curriculum intervention. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 17 (1), 46-57.

Banks, S., & Gupta, R. (1979). Television as a dependent variable, for a change. Paper presented at the 87th Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, New York, U.S.A.

Beavis, C., & Gough, N. (1991). World views and popular culture: What do they mean for how we Teach? Literacy: Making it explicit, making it possible. Australia, Australian Reading Association, 122-132.

Crouch, C. (1990). Soap in the eyes: Primary schoolgirl TV preferences. Metro, 81, 18-22.

Draft English and Communication Outcome Statements (1992). Perth, Western Australia: Ministry of Education.

Durkin, K. (1988). The influence of adult programmes on children. Paper presented at the BHP Australian Television Festival, Perth, Australia.

English Language Syllabus K-7 (1989). Perth, Western Australia: Ministry of Education.

First Steps (1990). Perth, Western Australia: Ministry of Education.

Fiske, J., & Hartley, J. (1978). Reading television. London: Methuen.

Fry, D., & McCain, T. (1980). Controlling children's television viewing : predictors of family television. Paper presented at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, Boston, U.S.A.

Gough, N. (1988). Children's images of the future: Their meaning and their implications for school curriculum. Curriculum Concerns, August 1988, 6-10.

Horsfield, P. (1986). Taming the television. Australia: Albatross.

Hodge, B., & Tripp, D. (1986). Children and television. U.K.: Cambridge.

Luke, A., & Walton, C. Teaching and assessing critical reading. (Unpublished manuscript).

McDonald, D., & Glynn, C. (1986). Television content viewing patterns: some clues from societal norms. Paper presented at the 36th Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, U.S.A.

Monaco, J. (1977). How to read a film. New York: Oxford University Press.

Morley, D. (1986). Family television, cultural power and domestic leisure.  
London: Comedia.

Moss, G. (1991). Media text, English texts or how to read differently. English in Australia, 95, 50-59.

Newcomb, H. (Ed). (1987). Television. The critical view. New York: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, P. (1986). The social nature of children's television viewing. Paper presented at the International Television Studies Conference, London, July 10-12.

R-12 Media Studies: A Curriculum Document in Support of Media Studies.  
(1983). Adelaide, South Australian Education Department.

Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts (1978)  
(Official Hansard Transcript of Evidence). Australia.

Sharman, K. (1979). Childrens television behaviors, its antecedents and relationships to school performance: A study of the television viewing behaviors of children in grade six of state primary schools in the metropolitan area of Melbourne. Hawthorn Victoria, Australian Council for Educational Research.

St.Peters, M. (1988). Television and families: What young children watch with their parents ? Paper presented at the Meeting of the Southwestern Society for Research in Human Development, New Orleans, U.S.A.

Tripp, D. (1988). The role of television as an educator. Paper presented at the BHP Australian Television Festival, Perth, Australia.

Winick, M., & Winick, C. (1979). The television experience: What children see. Beverly Hills, California: Sage.